

Letters To the Editor

C.I.A.

To the Editor:

With reference to your recent review of "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence," by Marchetti and Marks, and Myles Copeland's "Without Cloak and Dagger" (Aug. 18), why was Marchetti enjoined and his book censored? His revelations were not earthshaking.

Here, the contrast with Myles Copeland is invaluable. "Without Cloak and Dagger" is a virtual panegyric for the C.I.A., full of the romanticism of intelligence, the mystique of professionalism and expertise, myths of espionage and intelligence coups. Copeland's themes parallel the current C.I.A. public relations line. Moreover his book is virtually devoid of examples or facts, relying solely on the authoritative tone to carry the argument. Curiously it appears on the stands in time to assuage the C.I.A.'s post-Watergate critics and compete with the Marchetti-Marks book.

Marchetti and Marks look at the agency with a jaundiced eye. It details the C.I.A.'s foibles and follies, dispelling the romantic mystique the agency nurtures so carefully. It also provides a strong case for the termination of covert activities abroad and for greater restrictions on the agency's overall activities and budget.

Marchetti was enjoined in April, 1973 as the tide of Watergate was rising. It was the Nixon Administration's second attempt to establish legal precedent for prior censorship. A temporary injunction was issued in the Pentagon Papers case. This time a clear legal ruling was made in favor of prior censorship of classified material (whether injurious to the national interest or not). The Government now has precedent for censoring publication of classified information by former Government officials.

This, it seems, was the Administration's primary goal and the public's primary loss. For, if the C.I.A. can control information published about it, who can control the C.I.A.? And after our recent national nightmare who can doubt that Government censorship in the name of national security poses a far greater threat to our security and liberty than the revelations a hundred Marchettis might make? Is the nightmare really over if legal precedent remains? Unless it is overturned by the courts or removed by Congress the specter of censorship will haunt us.

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